

## **Extended Essay. Comment and Assessment Rubric - Language acquisition**

### **Criterion A: Focus and method**

This criterion focuses on the topic, the research question and the methodology. It assesses the explanation of the focus of the research (this includes the topic and the research question), how the research will be undertaken, and how the focus is maintained throughout the essay.

(Strands: Topic, Research question, Methodology)

The research topic must be defined in the form of a sharply focused question stated early in the essay and on the cover page. The purpose of the research investigation must be outlined in the introduction and should clearly fit one of the three required categories for language acquisition EEs. The methodology used, or the approach to the topic chosen, should also be addressed early in the essay. The student's personal experience or personal opinion is rarely relevant here.

- For category 1 (language) and category 2 (culture and society) essays, the introduction must make clear how the chosen topic is specific or of special interest to the target culture and/or language. Overly broad topics on society, social movements or general media issues should be avoided.
- For category 3 (literature) essays, the research question is an analysis of a literary type and all texts considered must be originally written in the target language. It is not necessary that the setting or subject matter be directly related to the culture. For example, Romeo and Juliet is set in Italy. It is, however, also possible to approach a category 3 essay considering the cultural context of the society for which it is written.

A clear and precisely stated research question, evidence of a well-informed logical treatment of the topic and an appropriate approach or method of study all contribute to constructing a well-planned essay.

**Criterion A: Focus and method.** *The Assessment Criteria*

Level	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.
1–2	<p>The topic is communicated unclearly and incompletely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identification and explanation of the topic is limited; the purpose and focus of the research is unclear, or does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject for which it is registered.</li></ul> <p>The research question is stated but not clearly expressed or too broad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The research question is too broad in scope to be treated effectively within the word limit and requirements of the task, or does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject for which it is registered.</li><li>- The intent of the research question is understood but has not been clearly expressed and/or the discussion of the essay is not focused on the research question.</li></ul> <p>Methodology of the research is limited</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The source(s) and/or method(s) to be used are limited in range given the topic and research question.</li><li>- There is limited evidence that their selection was informed.</li></ul>
3–4	<p>The topic is communicated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identification and explanation of the research topic is communicated; the purpose and focus of the research is adequately clear, but only partially appropriate.</li></ul> <p>The research question is clearly stated but only partially focused</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The research question is clear but the discussion in the essay is only partially focused and connected to the research question.</li></ul> <p>Methodology of the research is mostly complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Source(s) and/or method(s) to be used are generally relevant and appropriate given the topic and research question.</li><li>- There is some evidence that their selection(s) was informed.</li></ul> <p>If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than four marks can be awarded for this criterion.</p>
5–6	<p>The topic is communicated accurately and effectively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identification and explanation of the research topic is effectively communicated; the purpose and focus of the research is clear and appropriate.</li></ul> <p>The research question is clearly stated and focused</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The research question is clear and addresses an issue of research that is appropriately connected to the discussion in the essay.</li></ul> <p>Methodology of the research is complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- An appropriate range of relevant source(s) and/or method(s) have been applied in relation to the topic and research question.</li><li>- There is evidence of effective and informed selection of sources and/or methods.</li></ul>

## **Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding**

This criterion assesses the extent to which the research relates to the subject area/discipline used to explore the research question, or in the case of the world studies extended essay, the issue addressed and the two disciplinary perspectives applied, and additionally the way in which this knowledge and understanding is demonstrated through the use of appropriate terminology and concepts.

(Strands: Context, Subject-specific terminology and concepts)

Students must consult authentic reference materials, mainly, but not exclusively, written in the target language, depending on the category of essay being undertaken. Students need to demonstrate an ability to use appropriate material from their sources and references in order to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the topic within its cultural context. Students should strive to integrate primary and secondary material to inform the wider context and implications of the question. For all three essay categories, when considering the wider context, historical or biographical background need only be included if directly relevant to the research question. Students should strive to make relevant cultural connections where appropriate.

- For category 1 (language) and category 2 (culture and society) essays, this knowledge must be based at least partially on primary sources. Primary sources can be chosen from, for example, specific cultural artifacts such as advertisements, song lyrics and legal documents, or from a variety of texts such as poems, graphic novels, and brochures or pamphlets.
- For category 3 literature-based essays, all primary texts analysed must have originally been written in the target language. While secondary sources may help provide a framework, the quality of the student's understanding of the primary text(s) forms the main focus of the analysis.

The use of language must be appropriate to the topic and category chosen. For example, a category 3 essay should contain reasonable use of expected literary terminology in the analysis of the work(s).

Effective communication in language acquisition EEs includes reasonably correct use of vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar, as well as the selection of a register and style appropriate to the chosen topic. However, the mark awarded for criterion B is not a mark for grammatical accuracy. Whether a style is appropriate or not depends on common practice in the specific target language or culture. For example, it would be reasonable to expect more use of the passive voice in a German B extended essay than in a French B extended essay.

**Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding.** *The Assessment Criteria*

Level	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.
1–2	<p>Knowledge and understanding is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The selection of source material has limited relevance and is only partially appropriate to the research question.</li><li>- Knowledge of the topic/discipline(s)/issue is anecdotal, unstructured and mostly descriptive with sources not effectively being used.</li></ul> <p>Use of terminology and concepts is unclear and limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Subject-specific terminology and/or concepts are either missing or inaccurate, demonstrating limited knowledge and understanding.</li></ul>
3–4	<p>Knowledge and understanding is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The selection of source material is mostly relevant and appropriate to the research question.</li><li>- Knowledge of the topic/discipline(s)/issue is clear; there is an understanding of the sources used but their application is only partially effective.</li></ul> <p>Use of terminology and concepts is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The use of subject-specific terminology and concepts is mostly accurate, demonstrating an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding.</li></ul> <p>If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than four marks can be awarded for this criterion.</p>
5–6	<p>Knowledge and understanding is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The selection of source materials is clearly relevant and appropriate to the research question.</li><li>- Knowledge of the topic/discipline(s)/issue is clear and coherent and sources are used effectively and with understanding.</li></ul> <p>Use of terminology and concepts is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The use of subject-specific terminology and concepts is accurate and consistent, demonstrating effective knowledge and understanding.</li></ul>

## Criterion C: Critical thinking

This criterion assesses the extent to which critical-thinking skills have been used to analyse and evaluate the research undertaken.

(Strands: Research, Analysis and Discussion and evaluation)

Students should give their essays depth by developing an argument based on the research that results in relevant, meaningful conclusions that are consistent with the evidence presented. Personal views or assertions should not simply be stated, but need to be supported by evidence and reasoned argument. Critical thinking in this context will show knowledge and use of persuasive analysis and argument to support the interpretation or point of view expressed. Second-hand interpretations or viewpoints that are derived solely from secondary sources, or are purely descriptive or narrative in nature, will not be rewarded.

- For category 1 (language) and category 2 (culture and society) essays, a mere compilation of facts, a description of events or a list of features will not suffice.
- For category 3 (literature) essays, students must be aware that straightforward description of a literary text through plot summary or narration of the action does not advance an argument and should generally be avoided (although, where a little-known text is under discussion, a brief description may be appropriate).

Appropriate research should involve interrogating primary and secondary sources in light of the research question, so that the views of others are used to support the student's own argument and do not serve as a substitute for that argument. Students are encouraged to look critically at the secondary sources that they read. For example, it may be helpful for a student to challenge a statement by a critic instead of simply accepting it.

- For category 3 (literature) essays, the relevant information to support the argument of the essay should mainly come from the primary text, although consulting a range of secondary sources may also be helpful.

If students make use of internet-based sources, they should do so critically and circumspectly in full awareness of their potential unreliability.

**Criterion C: Critical thinking.** *The Assessment Criteria*

Level	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.
1–3	<p>The research is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The research presented is limited and its application is not clearly relevant to the RQ.</li></ul> <p>Analysis is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- There is limited analysis.</li><li>- Where there are conclusions to individual points of analysis these are limited and not consistent with the evidence.</li></ul> <p>Discussion/evaluation is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- An argument is outlined but this is limited, incomplete, descriptive or narrative in nature.</li><li>- The construction of an argument is unclear and/or incoherent in structure hindering understanding.</li><li>- Where there is a final conclusion, it is limited and not consistent with the arguments/evidence presented.</li><li>- There is an attempt to evaluate the research, but this is superficial.</li></ul> <p>If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than three marks can be awarded for this criterion.</p>
4–6	<p>The research is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Some research presented is appropriate and its application is partially relevant to the Research question.</li></ul> <p>Analysis is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- There is analysis but this is only partially relevant to the research question; the inclusion of irrelevant research detracts from the quality of the argument.</li><li>- Any conclusions to individual points of analysis are only partially supported by the evidence.</li></ul> <p>Discussion/evaluation is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- An argument explains the research but the reasoning contains inconsistencies.</li><li>- The argument may lack clarity and coherence but this does not significantly hinder understanding.</li><li>- Where there is a final or summative conclusion, this is only partially consistent with the arguments/evidence presented.</li><li>- The research has been evaluated but not critically.</li></ul>

7-9	<p>The research is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The majority of the research is appropriate and its application is clearly relevant to the research question.</li> </ul> <p>Analysis is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The research is analysed in a way that is clearly relevant to the research question; the inclusion of less relevant research rarely detracts from the quality of the overall analysis.</li> <li>- Conclusions to individual points of analysis are supported by the evidence but there are some minor inconsistencies.</li> </ul> <p>Discussion/evaluation is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An effective reasoned argument is developed from the research, with a conclusion supported by the evidence presented.</li> <li>- This reasoned argument is clearly structured and coherent and supported by a final or summative conclusion; minor inconsistencies may hinder the strength of the overall argument.</li> <li>- The research has been evaluated, and this is partially critical.</li> </ul>
10-12	<p>The research is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The research is appropriate to the research question and its application is consistently relevant.</li> </ul> <p>Analysis is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The research is analysed effectively and clearly focused on the research question; the inclusion of less relevant research does not significantly detract from the quality of the overall analysis.</li> <li>- Conclusions to individual points of analysis are effectively supported by the evidence.</li> </ul> <p>Discussion/evaluation is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An effective and focused reasoned argument is developed from the research with a conclusion reflective of the evidence presented.</li> <li>- This reasoned argument is well structured and coherent; any minor inconsistencies do not hinder the strength of the overall argument or the final or summative conclusion.</li> <li>- The research has been critically evaluated.</li> </ul>

## **Criterion D: Presentation**

This criterion assesses the extent to which the presentation follows the standard format expected for academic writing and the extent to which this aids effective communication.

(Strands: Structure, Layout)

This criterion relates to how closely the EE conforms to accepted academic standards for the way in which research papers should be presented. It also relates to how well these elements support the reading, understanding and evaluation of the essay.

Students may provide a section and sub-section structure to their essays with appropriate, informative headings. This will be dependent on the particular stylistic conventions of individual languages and category of essay chosen; thus, students need to be aware of the appropriate format for their chosen subject.

### **Use of charts, images and tables**

Any visuals must be prudently selected and used only if clearly relevant to the topic being discussed.

Students should be careful not to think that images and charts speak for themselves. Any illustrative material used within the body of the essay to help clarify an argument needs accompanying discussion or analysis in order to be effective. If analysing an advertising campaign, for example, the student may find it useful to include the image within the text for easy reader reference and to aid the flow of the essay.

Students must not include illustrative material in the appendices if they are relevant to the analysis, discussion or evaluation of the essay—they must be contained within the body of the essay. There should be no addition of superfluous material as appendices as examiners will not refer to this material.

Any material that is not original must be carefully acknowledged, with specific attention paid to the acknowledgment and referencing of quotes and ideas. This process is applicable to audio-visual material, text, graphs and data published in print and electronic sources. If the referencing does not meet the minimum standard as indicated in the guide (name of author, date of publication, title of source and page numbers as applicable), or is not consistently applied, the work will be considered as a case of possible academic misconduct.

A bibliography is essential and has to be presented in a standard format. Title page, table of contents, page numbers, etc must contribute to the quality of presentation.

The essay must not exceed 4,000 words of narrative. Graphs, figures, calculations, diagrams, formulae and equations are not included in the word count. Students should be aware that examiners will not read beyond the 4,000-word limit, or assess any material presented past this point.



**Criterion D: Presentation.** *The Assessment Criteria*

Level	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.
1–2	<p>Presentation is acceptable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The structure of the essay is generally appropriate in terms of the expected conventions for the topic, argument and subject in which the essay is registered.</li><li>- Some layout considerations may be missing or applied incorrectly.</li><li>- Weaknesses in the structure and/or layout do not significantly impact the reading, understanding or evaluation of the extended essay.</li></ul>
3–4	<p>Presentation is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The structure of the essay clearly is appropriate in terms of the expected conventions for the topic, the argument and subject in which the essay is registered.</li><li>- Layout considerations are present and applied correctly.</li><li>- The structure and layout support the reading, understanding and evaluation of the extended essay.</li></ul>

## Criterion E: Engagement

This criterion assesses the student's engagement with their research focus and the research process. It will be applied by the examiner at the end of the assessment of the essay, after considering the student's *Reflections on planning and progress form*.

(Strands: Process, Research focus)

This criterion is applied by the examiner at the end of the assessment of the essay, after considering the student's Reflections on planning and progress Form (RPPF). It assesses the overall impression the examiner has with regard to the student's engagement with the research process and their subject area.

Students are expected to provide reflections on the decision-making and planning process undertaken in completing the essay. Students must demonstrate how they arrived at a topic as well as the methods and approach used. This criterion assesses the extent to which a student has evidenced the rationale for decisions made throughout the planning process and the skills and understandings developed.

For example, students may reflect on:

- the approach and strategies chosen, and their relative success
- the Approaches to learning skills they have acquired and how they have developed as a learner
- how their conceptual understandings have developed or changed as a result of their research
- setbacks faced in their research and how they overcame these
- questions that emerged as a result of their research
- what they would do differently if they were to undertake the research again.

Effective reflection highlights the journey the student has engaged in through the EE process. In order to demonstrate that engagement, students must show evidence of critical and reflective thinking that goes beyond simply describing the procedures that have been followed. Reflections must provide the examiner with an insight into student thinking, creativity and originality within the research process. The student voice must be clearly present and demonstrate the learning that has taken place.

**Criterion E: Engagement.** *The Assessment Criteria*

Level	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.
1–2	Engagement is limited. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reflections on decision-making and planning are mostly descriptive.</li><li>- These reflections communicate a limited degree of personal engagement with the research focus and/or research process.</li></ul>
3–4	Engagement is good. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reflections on decision-making and planning are analytical and include reference to conceptual understanding and skill development.</li><li>- These reflections communicate a moderate degree of personal engagement with the research focus and process of research, demonstrating some intellectual initiative.</li></ul>
5–6	Engagement is excellent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reflections on decision-making and planning are evaluative and include reference to the student’s capacity to consider actions and ideas in response to setbacks experienced in the research process.</li><li>- These reflections communicate a high degree of intellectual and personal engagement with the research focus and process of research, demonstrating authenticity, intellectual initiative and/or creative approach in the student voice.</li></ul>